



H.R. 176 – Shirley A. Chisholm United States-Caribbean Educational Exchange Act of 2007

Floor Situation

H.R. 176 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) on January 4, 2007. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs reported the bill out of Committee on July 23, 2007.

H.R. 176 is scheduled to be considered on the floor on July 30, 2007.

Summary

H.R. 176 authorizes the Secretary of State to create an educational exchange program between the United States and CARICOM countries (also known as the Caribbean Community). This program will be known as the “Shirley A. Chisholm United States-Caribbean Educational Exchange Program.” This program will be for:

- Secondary school students from CARICOM countries will:
 - Attend a public or private secondary school in the United States;
 - Participate in activities designed to promote a greater understanding of the values and culture of the United States; and
 - Have the option to live with a United States host family and experience life in a United States host community; and,
- Undergraduate students, graduate students, post-graduate students, and scholars from CARICOM countries will:
 - Attend a public or private college or university, including a community college, in the United States;
 - Participate in activities designed to promote a greater understanding of the values and culture of the United States; and,

- Have the option to live with a United States host family and experience life in a United States host community or live in an on-campus housing environment.

The program will offer scholarships to students and scholars based on merit and need and will seek to achieve gender equality in granting scholarships under the program.

The bill authorizes such sums as are necessary for fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

Background

According to a 2005 World Bank Report on the Caribbean region, high rates of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, have had severe implications on poverty and income distributions, as well as drug trafficking and addiction. The 2005 World Bank Report also concludes that better synchronization is needed between curricula in CARICOM countries and the skills needed in evolving national and regional job markets and economies.

Caribbean leaders have highlighted the need for increased educational opportunities for Caribbean students in fields that will contribute to and support an increasingly competitive regional economy. From 2003 through 2005, 217 Caribbean leaders participated in exchange programs with the United States that focused on good governance, combating drug trafficking, anti-corruption, and other regional issues of concern.

Shirley Anita Chisholm, who served as a member of the United States House of Representatives from 1968 to 1983, had family roots in the Caribbean nation of Barbados, was a staunch advocate for educational opportunity and access, and increased support for historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions in the United States.

Members of CARICOM include:

Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos Islands, The Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago.

Cost

“CBO estimates that implementing this provision would require funding of \$15 million a year, and would cost \$2 million in 2008 and \$48 million over the 2008-2012 period, assuming appropriation of the estimated amounts.” [Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate](#)

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